

Family Education Survey

Summary Report & Recommendations
Published: July 2020

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SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

21,356
Family Responses

As public schools across New Mexico announced their Continuous Learning Plans and students adjusted to a new and unfamiliar distance-learning model, the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) designed the Family Education Survey to seek immediate feedback. The survey measures family experience before and after the switch to distance learning. It includes questions about social and emotional learning, culturally and linguistically responsive practices, school communications, and student well-being and engagement. In addition, the survey asked families about barriers they faced during distance learning and what they needed in preparation for school reentry.



77% of families agreed/strongly agreed that resources & guidance during distance learning were **linguistically accessible**.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

78% of families whose children receive Special Education services knew whom to contact to resolve a problem and **76% said their problems were effectively resolved.**

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) is committed to an educational system that meets the needs of all students. During the uncertain times of COVID-19, schools were closed and educators and families were asked to quickly adjust to a distance-learning model for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. In an effort to gain insight into family and student experiences, the PED contacted a third party vendor (TriPod)¹ to support the development of a statewide family education survey. The PED requested an honest, first-hand assessment of families' pre- and post-distance learning school experiences. The information provided in this summary report was provided to the PED's executive leadership team as well as the NM School Reentry Task Force with the intention of centering student and family experiences and needs in conversations on school re-opening in fall 2020.

Survey Content

The Family Education Survey consisted of items pulled from previously established TriPod surveys, as well as modified some question items to fit the educational context of New Mexico and statewide priority areas of the PED. The TriPod survey areas include:

Distance Learning Indicators

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Governor's office issued a series of Executive Orders and public health orders and the PED made the difficult decision to close public schools beginning March 16, 2020. In turn, each Local Education Agency (LEA) created a Continuous Learning Plan (CLP) to address their efforts to engage students through a distance learning model.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Environment Indicators

TriPod uses a variety of indicators to address the learning environment. Items were selected from the survey's question bank that aligned to PED's Whole Child focus area.

Family Survey Items

The PED recognizes that effective family engagement is a critical component to supporting student success. In addition, it is important to the PED that schools provide an educational experience that is *both* reflective of, and responsive to the unique cultures and languages that reflect the diversity of the state of New Mexico.

In an effort to gain additional insight and incorporate family feedback into upcoming policy and programming recommendations, the PED included the following open-ended question prompts:

- *What problems or barriers has your family faced with distance learning?*
- *What suggestions do you have to enhance or improve distance learning?*

¹ TriPod granted the PED services at a single-user sign-on rate. Details of the grant agreement are included in the MOU between TriPod and the PED.

- *Has there been a highlight from your child's experience that you'd like to share? What makes this aspect of distance learning stand out to you?*
- *What do you need to feel safe, secure, and prepared to send your child back to school?*

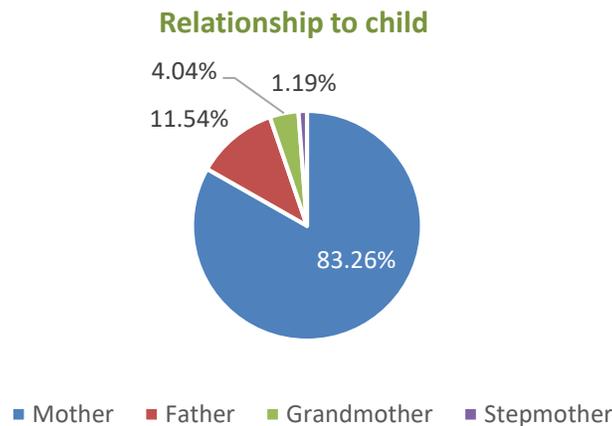
Communications & Administration

The PED promoted the family survey through social media channels (e.g. Facebook and Twitter). The survey was also shared via several PED listserves (e.g. Superintendents and school leaders; Principals; the Family Cabinet) and members of the New Mexico Teacher Leader Network (NMTLN) were asked to share the survey with their colleagues, students, and families. In addition, the survey was promoted on a Tribal Education Directors' call and shared with other community stakeholders for dissemination. The survey was administered electronically and was accessible in English, Spanish, and Navajo.

Response Rates

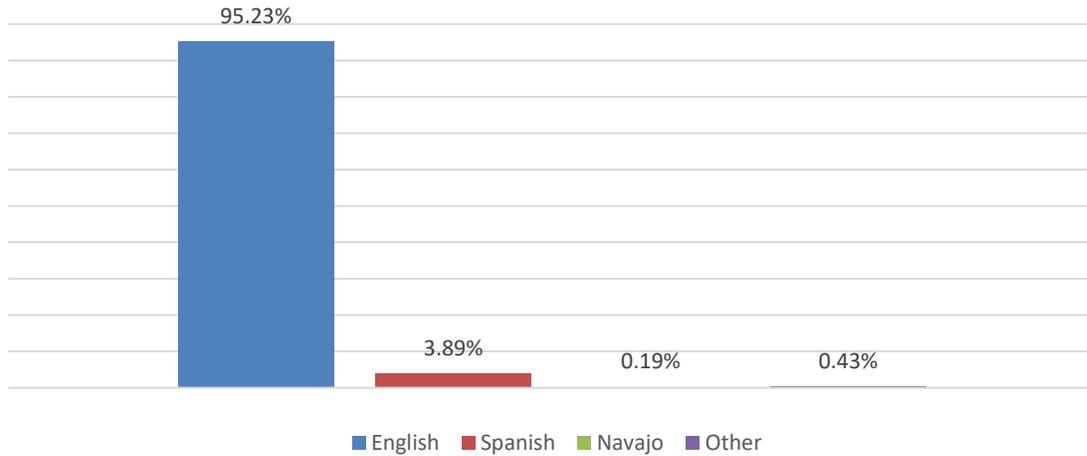
According to statewide enrollment data for SY 2018 – 2019, there were 331,636 students enrolled in New Mexico's public schools. There were 21,356 responses to the family survey inclusive of 23,222 caregiver-by-child responses, which reflects a response rate of approximately 7%. The grade with the least amount of students represented was 12th (at 959 caregiver-by-child responses), while 1st grade had the greatest representation (with 2,175 caregiver-by-child responses).

The self-reported demographics of participants who completed the non-compulsory background questions include:



Additional responses included: "Another relative" (0.94%), Siblings (0.78%), Stepfathers (.59%), Grandfathers (0.56%), "Some other adult" (0.53%), and Foster parents (0.37%).

Primary Home Language

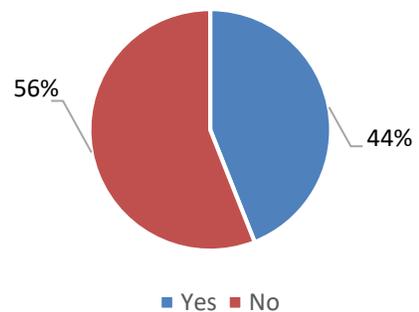


In addition to the languages referenced above, less than 0.10% of participants indicated one of the following additional languages (listed in order of frequency): Chinese (Mandarin; Cantonese), Tagalog, French, Arabic, German, or Vietnamese.

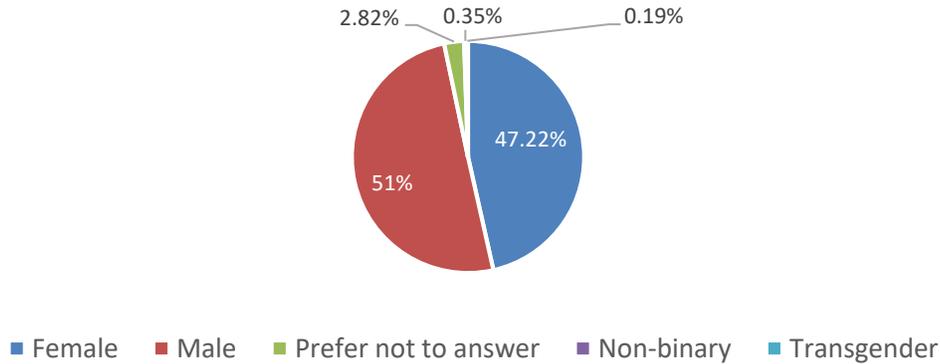
According to statewide district demographics, the primary home language was reported at 74% English, 21% Spanish, and 3% Navajo (Dine) with additional languages reporting at 1.2%. As such, there is significant underrepresentation of households speaking a language other than English in the survey responses, most notably from Spanish speaking households.

Free & Reduced Lunch

Note: According to statewide data, 70.9% of students received free or reduced lunch in SY 2018-2019. As such, we believed there was an under-representation of economically disadvantaged families in survey respondents.



Student Gender Identity



Summary of Results

The survey asked a series of thirteen (13) items on a scale of *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. Families were prompted to rate their level of agreement to each item regarding their experiences before the switch to distance learning and then after the switch to distance learning. A complete set of this data can be found in Appendix A.

Families shared that they wanted more **communication** from their child’s district/school after the switch to distance learning, with only 4% of families saying they agreed or strongly agreed with wanting less communication. In addition, there was less classroom discussion of student mindset related items such as hard work and effort helping children learn, how to set goals and make plans to achieve them, things students are good at and those they can improve in. There was a slight increase (2%) in classroom conversations around what to do when feeling scared, nervous or angry. According to family feedback, students experienced more **academic stress** and there was an increase in complaints of school being **boring** after the switch to distance learning. Overall, families reported a more positive learning experience prior to the switch to distance learning. The items most significantly impacted by the switch to distance learning include:

Enjoys school & Peer support

Both areas reflected a 42% decrease after the switch to distance learning. Specifically, 74% of families agreed or strongly agreed that their child enjoyed school before the switch to distance learning, as compared to 32% after the switch to distance learning. Similarly, before the switch to distance learning, 79% of families agreed or strongly agreed that their peers, compared to 27% after the switch to distance learning, supported their child.

Ability to meet needs of child

Families reported that before the switch to distance learning, their child’s teacher was able to meet the individual needs of their child.² The level of agreement dropped by over

² 90% of families somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that their child’s teacher was able to meet their individual needs before the switch to distance learning.

30% when families were asked if their child's teacher was able to meet their individual needs after the switch to distance learning.

Child invested in learning

In response to "my child was invested and engaged in their learning," 72% of families agreed or strongly agreed this was true before the switch to distance learning. After the switch to distance learning, only 38% of families agreed to strongly agreed with this statement.

Socio-emotional and intellectual growth

The satisfaction rates for schools supporting the socio-emotional and intellectual growth of students were comparable, according to family response. Families indicated that they were more satisfied with support for their child's development before distance learning than after. For example, 70% of families agreed or strongly agreed that schools supported their child's social and emotional growth before the switch, compared with just 40% after the switch to distance learning. Similarly, there was a 32% decrease in agreement with respect to school support for students' intellectual growth.³

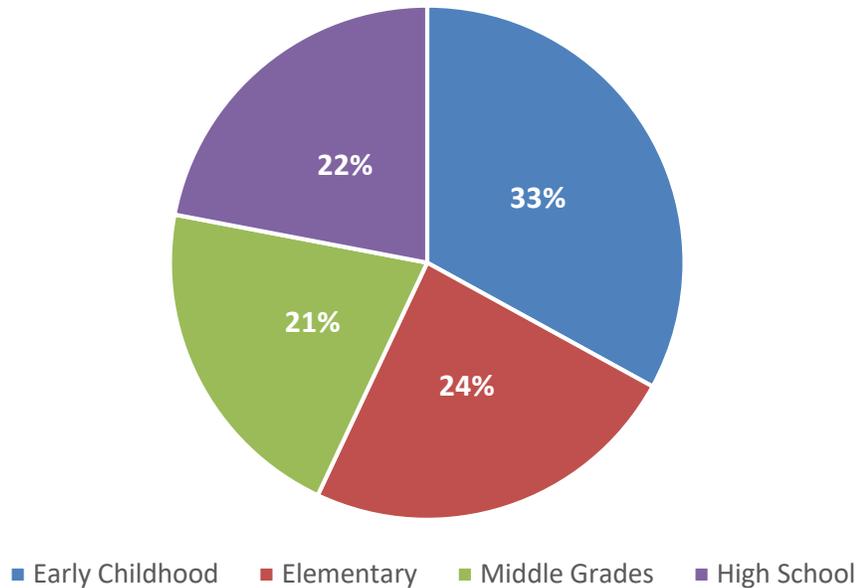
With respect to family engagement, only 58% of families agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the information on **how to support their children's learning at home** before the switch to distance learning. The level of agreement dropped 20 percentage points to 38% satisfaction with information provided after the switch to distance learning.

³ 73% of families agreed or strongly agreed that their child's intellectual growth was supported prior and 41% after the switch to distance learning.

RESULTS BY GRADE LEVEL

Overview

This section compares grade-level student experiences to the overall state average on survey items. For summary purposes, PED grouped students into four grade categories: Early Childhood (Prekindergarten – 2nd Grade), Elementary (3rd – 5th Grade), Middle Grades (6th – 8th Grade), and High School (9th – 12th Grade). Participation rates included:

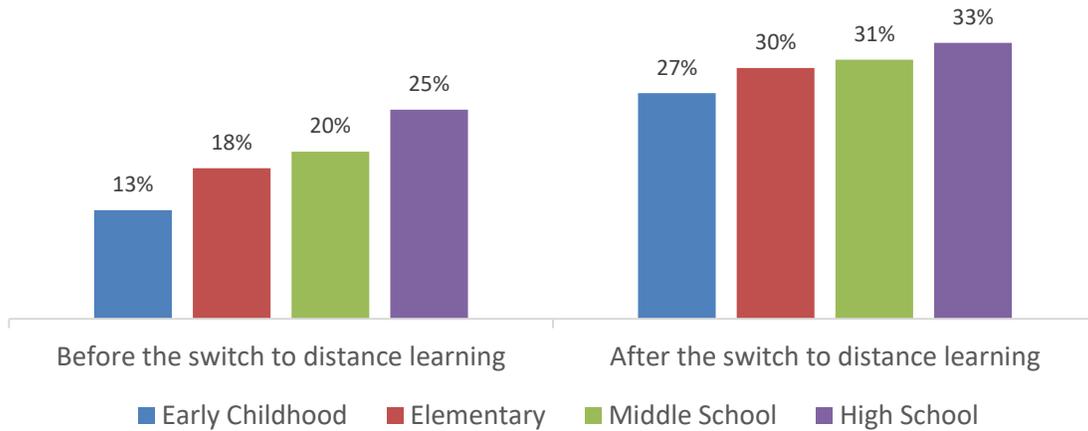


With respect to grade-by-grade comparisons, communication preferences were an area of significant interest. For example, 33% of high school families agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted more communication prior to the switch to distance learning, compared to just 22% of PreK-8 families. The discrepancy is similar when comparing the responses of PreK – 5th families to 6th – 12th graders’ families.⁴ This trend continued over time with nearly half of Secondary families reporting a preference for more communication after the switch to distance learning, compared to roughly one third of Primary families.

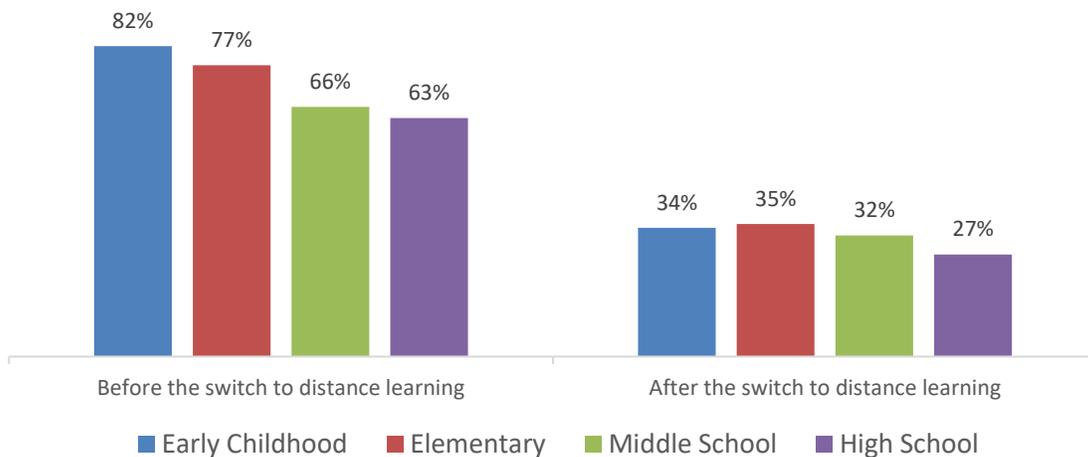
In addition to communication trends, notable differences occurred with respect to academic stress and student enjoyment of school, when looking at the following grade-by-grade comparisons:

⁴ Only 19% of PreK-5th grade families agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted more communication prior to the switch, compared with 32% of 6th-12th graders’ families.

My child was stressed by the school's academic expectations



My child enjoyed school



Early Childhood: Prekindergarten – Grade 2

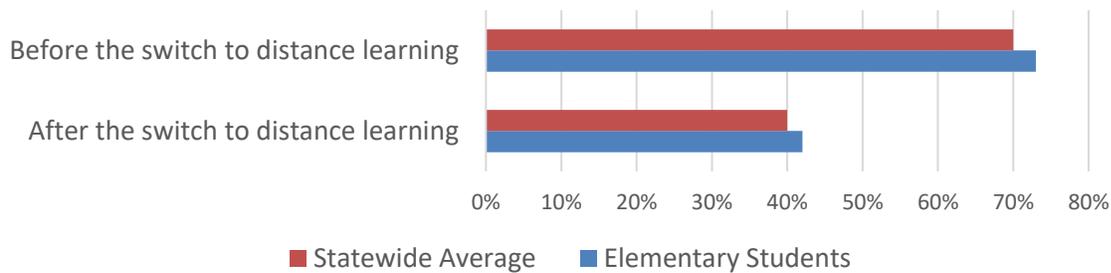
Early Childhood families expressed less of a desire for increased communication, both before and after the switch to distance learning, compared to statewide communication preferences. In addition, these families had a higher level of satisfaction with the guidance and resources provided to support learning at home. There were no notable discrepancies for early childhood family experiences in the following areas: ability to meet needs of child, socio-emotional and intellectual growth, and academic stress. However, it is worth noting (as seen in the table above) that academic stress more than doubled for early childhood students after the switch to distance learning.

Overall, families of early childhood students reported similar rates of enjoyment, boredom complaints, and student engagement both before and after the switch to distance learning.

Elementary: Grades 3 - 5

Families of elementary-aged children reported similar rates of agreement regarding support for intellectual growth, information to support learning at home, linguistic accessibility of resources, peer support, complaints of boredom, student engagement, and ability to meet the needs of individual children. Elementary students' level of academic stress, according to respondents, was identical to the statewide average. There was a modest distinction for this student group regarding supports for socio-emotional growth...

I am satisfied with the way my child's teacher supported their social and emotional growth...



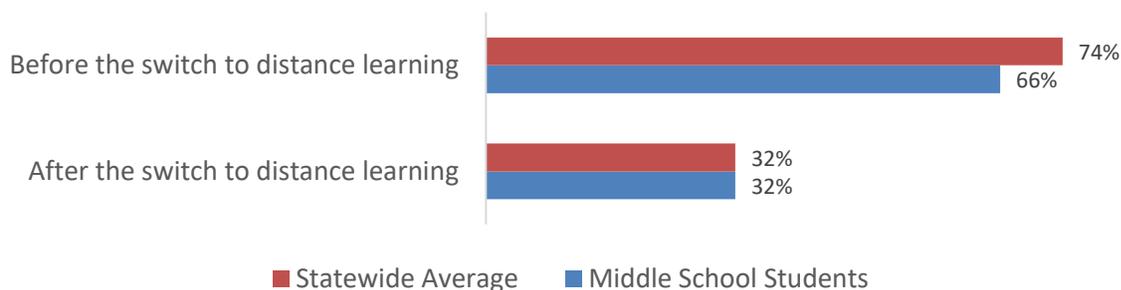
Elementary families expressed a somewhat lower preference for more communication after the switch to distance learning, compared to the statewide average. In addition, they reported slightly higher levels of enjoyment both before and after the switch to distance learning, compared to the statewide average.

Middle Grades: Grades 6 – 8

Communication continued to be a trend with middle school families, who reported a stronger overall preference for increased communication as compared to the statewide average. Middle school families reported that teachers were able to meet the individual needs of their child at a slightly lower rate than the statewide average. In addition, families of middle school students were somewhat less satisfied with the school's ability to support their child's socio emotional and intellectual growth.

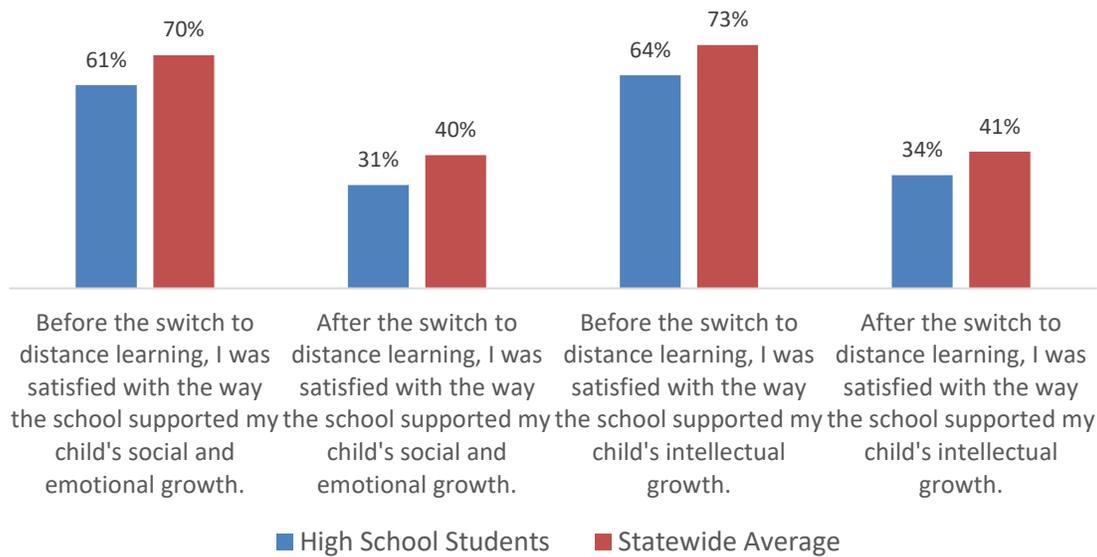
With respect to enjoyment, middle school students had a less favorable experience before the switch to distance learning than the statewide average, but identical rates after the switch.

My child enjoyed school...



High School: Grades 9 – 12

Families of high school students reported overall lower levels of satisfaction with teachers' ability to meet the needs of their individual children. High school families reported similar rates for student engagement, as well as rates of enjoyment at school, compared to their lower school peers. Notably, high school families reported higher rates of academic stress, compared to the statewide average, before the switch to distance learning. In addition, there was some discrepancy between levels of **satisfaction regarding supports** for socio-emotional and academic growth.



SURVEY TRENDS

Background Information

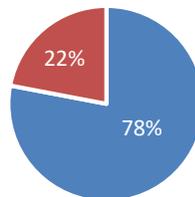
The PED is committed to promoting Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) practices in the classroom and to supporting increasingly responsive programs and policies. The survey asks for information about student and family identities to help us better understand the experiences and preferences of all families, across all schools. The family survey asked a series of background questions including grade level, gender identity, race and ethnicity, reduced lunch status, tribal affiliation, home language, level of adult education, and family structure. Families were also asked if their children received special education services and if they had computers/tablets in the home. **These background questions were optional**; families were not required to respond in order to complete the survey.

This section address results from student groups in isolation and does not account for the experience of students and families who exist at the intersection of two or more of the below-mentioned identity markers.

Special Education

Of the 23,183 individual student-level survey responses, 19,620 responded to the question, “Does your child receive special education services?” Of those who responded, 4,751 responded in the affirmative, representing 24% of survey participants. Conditional upon their response to this question, participants were prompted with additional inquiry:

If you encounter a problem with special education services, is there someone that you’re able to contact to resolve your problem?



■ Yes ■ No

Of those who knew who responded in the affirmative, 77% said the person they contacted was *effective to extremely effective* at resolving the problem.

While responses regarding the experience of students receiving special education services maintained a lower level of satisfaction than their peers who do not receive services, the distinction was not consistent across indicators.

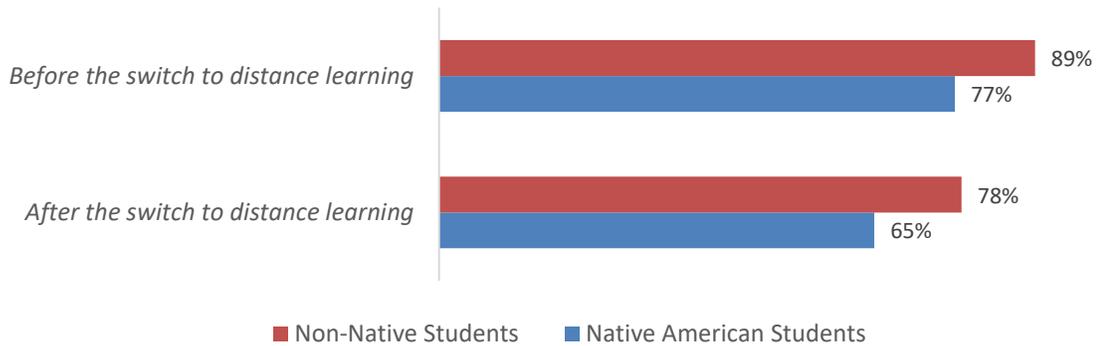
Native American Students

According to statewide data from the 2018-2019 school year, Native American Students comprise 11% of the student population in New Mexico. Representation in the family survey was about 3% lower than the overall Native American student population. Similar

to general trends, the experiences of Native American students was less agreeable after the switch to distance learning.

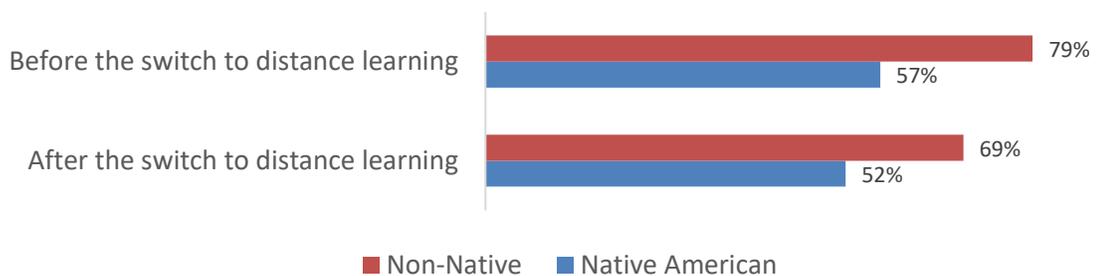
There were no substantial differences in communication frequency preference between the families of Native American students and their non-Native peers. However, linguistically accessible guidance and resources were less available to Native American students after the switch to distance learning.

My child's school provided guidance and resources in a language that is accessible to me and my family...



Language and culture was a distinguishable theme when comparing the experiences of Native American students to their non-Native peers. In addition to the provision of accessible guidance and resources, families reported lower levels of satisfaction with representation of their language and culture in their child’s education.

My family's language & culture was reflected in & respected by the learning environment...



While student engagement decreased after the switch to distance learning, it did so at a lower rate for Native American students than for their non-Native peers.⁵ Conversely,

⁵ 46% of families of Native American students agreed or strongly agreed that their child was engaged and invested in learning after the switch, compared to 37% of non-Native students’ families. (Rates of agreement for student engagement prior to distance learning were 73% for non-Native and 71% for Native American students.)

Native American students experienced greater stress both before and after distance learning, compared to their non-Native peers.

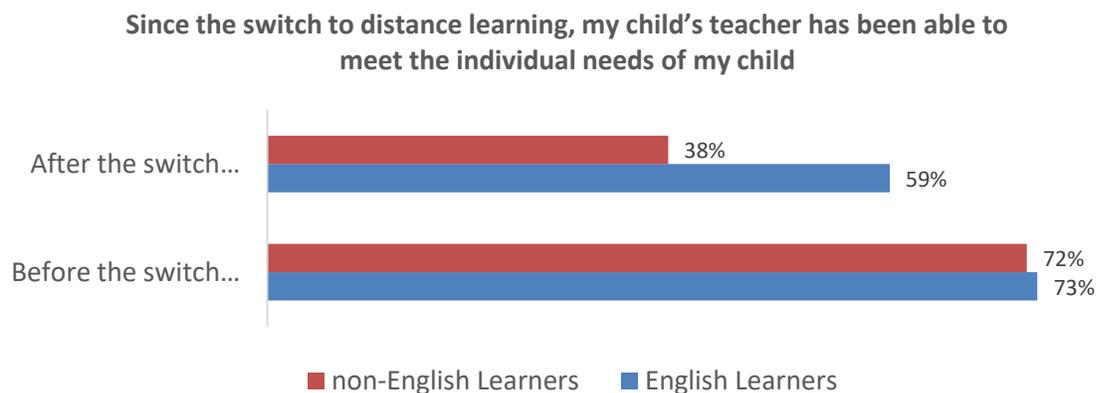
Language Learners

The survey asked participants to identify their primary home language. For the purposes of identifying English Learners (EL), we used the latter, consistent with how schools and districts utilize a home language survey. Overall, 5.21% of participants indicated that their primary home language was a language other than English⁶. Of those languages represented, Spanish was the most common (3.89%) followed by “Other” (.43%). Compared to statewide data⁷, this reflects an under-representation of families of language learners in survey responses.

On average, families of ELs indicated a more favorable experience after the switch to distance learning than their non-ELL peers. For example, the level of agreement remained higher for this student group in response to “Since the switch to distance learning, I am satisfied with the way the school supported my child’s social and emotional growth;” and “Since the switch to distance learning, I am satisfied with the way the school supported my child’s intellectual growth.” Some areas of distinction include:

Ability to meet needs of child

While the level of agreement was similar for English Learners and their peers prior to distance learning, English Learner families reported a higher level of satisfaction after the switch.

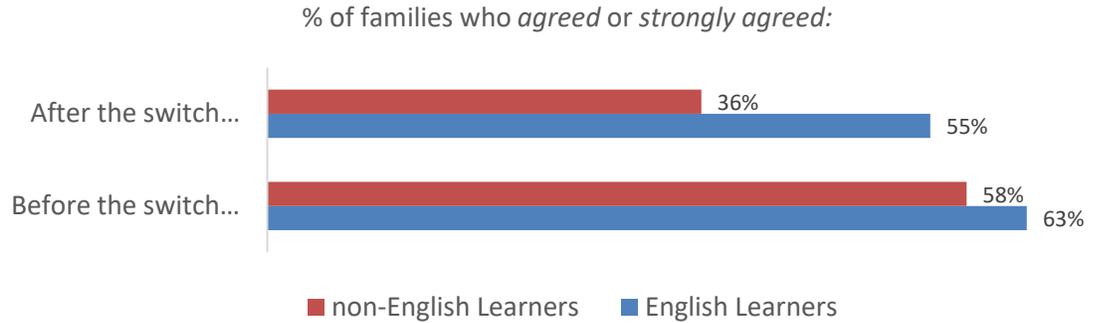


Information to help learning at home

While families of language learners indicated a preference for more frequent communication after the switch to distance learning, they reported a level of satisfaction regarding resources to support learning at home at a rate of almost 20 percentage points higher than their non-ELL peers.

⁶ 1,096 responses indicated a language other than English as their primary home language.

⁷ According to www.newmexicoschools.com, English learners accounted for 16% of the total student population in school year 2018 – 2019.



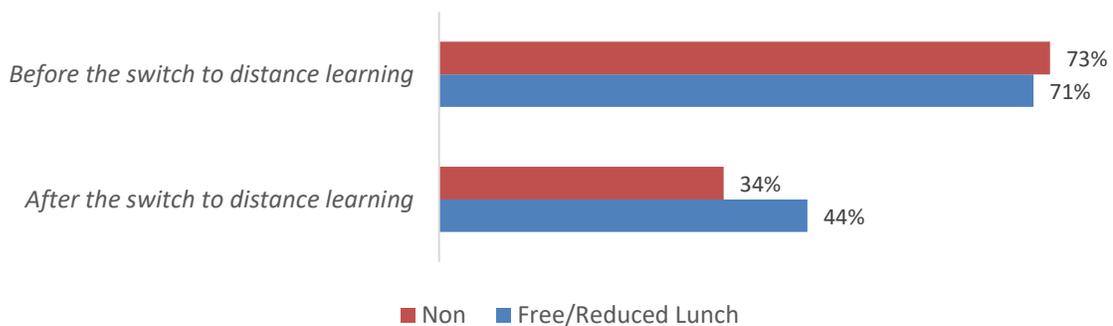
Families of English language learners reported a higher rate of student engagement after the switch to distance learning, compared to their peers, as well as 3% higher level of agreement regarding their child’s enjoyment of school. In addition, there was no notable distinction between level of agreement with respect for language and culture, nor regarding the provision of guidance and resources in an accessible language.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

The survey asked families if their child received free or reduced-price lunches in order to identify and assess the experiences of economically disadvantaged children. As noted in the response rates, 44% of families responded in the affirmative. Families of this student group reported higher levels of student engagement after the switch to distance learning than their non-economically disadvantaged peers.⁸ While levels of satisfaction regarding support for their child’s socio-emotional and intellectual growth were lower than their non-economically disadvantaged peers prior to distance learning, families in this student group maintained higher levels of satisfaction for these two survey items after the switch to distance learning.

Economically disadvantaged families reported a higher level of satisfaction with their school’s ability to meet the individual needs of their child.

My child's teacher was able to meet the individual needs of my child...



⁸ 43% of families in this sub- group agreed or strongly agreed that their child was invested after the switch, compared to 34% of non-economically disadvantaged families.

Overall, fewer students in this sub-group complained that school was boring and they maintained similar rates of peer support and enjoyment at school compared to non-economically disadvantaged peers.

Qualitative Analysis

As noted, the survey asked a series of open-ended questions to assess the barriers, highlights, and suggestions families had with respect to distance learning. In addition, the survey asked families what they needed in order to send their child back to school, given the concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding health orders. These narrative data written by families are rich beyond numerical quantification. Important themes emerged including

Barriers

Survey participants expressed some commonly faced challenges while navigating distance learning with their children. In addition to health and wellness concerns and balancing work-home-school priorities, families identified the following barriers:

- Unreliable internet and access to technology
- Clear communication
- Limited feedback
- Time management and routines
- Motivation and engagement

Suggestions

Families provided a variety of suggestions for how to improve distance-learning models. In addition, themes in this area included:

- Maintain rigor and re-introduce grading
- Allow for choice and flexibility
- Be thoughtful of teachers' time
- Improve communications
- Introduce new content

Bright Spots

During challenging times, it is important to honor and celebrate when things go well and where folks have experienced success. We hope that the “bright spots” analysis will help to inform future iterations of distance learning, when and where appropriate. Promising themes included:

- Improved time management
- Independence and autonomy
- One-on-one time
- Focus on safety and self-care

School Reentry

The PED received over 15,000 child-by-caregiver responses to the question, “What do you need to feel safe, secure, and prepared to send your child back to school?” Overwhelmingly, families expressed concern for schools being able to follow CDC and

medical guidelines and for children being able to adhere to enhanced safety procedures (e.g. wearing face coverings; regular hand washing; keeping workspaces clean and disinfected).

While many families advocated for smaller class sizes and regular sanitation/cleaning procedures upon returning to school, even more families referenced staying home and/or homeschooling. There are more than 2.5x as many references to home/homeschooling as there are to maintaining smaller in-person class sizes. In addition, there were 2.6x more references to online than to *in-person* schooling for the fall. There were very few references to *in-person* or *remote* learning and while some participants referred to combination, hybrid, or blended learning, barely 0.01% of families referenced these terms.

Families frequently referenced the need for a vaccine as a reentry requirement and expressed elevated concern for medically fragile students, students and teachers with pre-existing health conditions, and those living in intergenerational homes (i.e. with elderly grandparents or other family members).

FINDINGS

Finding 1: Student Wellness

Families want more support for their children’s growth if distance learning continues. In addition, the issues of academic stress and student enjoyment need to be addressed. According to the results of this survey, as academic stress increases, student enjoyment decreases. This trend is amplified as children grow older (i.e. high school students report higher stress and less enjoyment than early childhood students do). While there was a slight uptick in classroom discussion around what to do when feeling scared, nervous or angry after the switch to distance learning, overall support for fostering positive student mindsets decreased. As students return to school – whether in-person, via distance learning, or through a hybrid model – it is important that PED continue to monitor their well-being and provide appropriate support and guidance across grade levels.

Finding 2: The “Digital Divide”

Access to hardware, technology, and reliable internet posed significant barriers for families after the switch to distance learning. It is important that PED operate with a clear and comprehensive understanding of “gap” areas and communities in need of additional technical support. It will be of utmost importance that the PED continue to work with cross-sector partners to support expanding infrastructure and access for our students and families. In addition, the PED shall encourage LEAs to leverage federal and local funding to provide every student with a digital device and support for internet connectivity.

Finding 3: Student Engagement

After the switch to distance learning, families responded that they felt their children were less engaged. They also reported a drop in both satisfaction with support for student growth and with educators’ ability to meet the individual needs of their child. At the same time, we saw a significant decrease in student engagement after the switch to distance learning. It is important to examine the connection between these items and to explore the supports needed for educators to continually engage their students and ensure children are invested in a distance learning experience.

Finding 4: Family Engagement Preferences

Consistent with best practices in effective family engagement, families expressed an interest in increased communication as well as guidance and resources to support their child’s learning at home. Across grades and family background, the survey revealed an overall preference for increased communication from educators both before and after the switch to distance learning. While ongoing communication and resources to support learning at home are more common in the primary grades, secondary families expressed an increasing desire for these types of family engagement practices. It is critical to explore and implement differentiated practices in academic partnership across the grade continuum and establish a strong culture of engagement at the school/district level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ongoing Research Needed

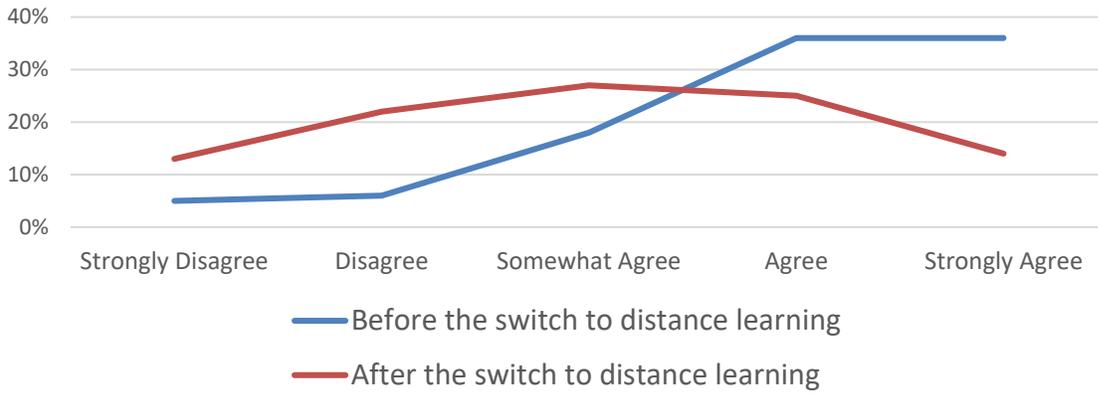
While this summary report provides an overview of the survey results, we recognize the need for additional inquiry and analysis of the data. Initial exploration of the disaggregated data suggest that further research and analysis is needed to more deeply understand the experiences of children and families who live at the intersection of multiple, historically marginalized identities.

Furthermore, while not explicitly addressed in this report, data is available from the survey regarding level of caregiver education and access to a device (i.e. computer or tablet). This information may help support family engagement work as well as ongoing efforts to address the digital divide. For example, at first glance, students whose caregiver did not finish high school reported a level of student engagement after the switch to distance learning 17% higher than those whose caregiver had a college or advanced degree. In addition, caregivers who did not finish high school (who comprised just 2% of participants) expressed a higher rate of satisfaction regarding their child's socio-emotional and intellectual growth after the switch to distance learning as compared to their peers with college and post-grad degrees.

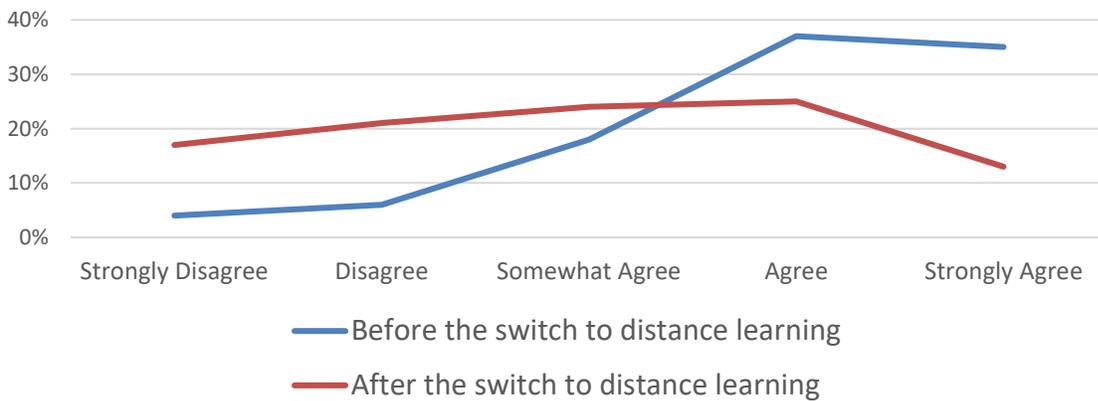
Finally, families provided a wealth of feedback in their narrative responses. This information warrants additional examination to determine quantifiable trends that may inform ongoing programming and policy.

APPENDIX A Statewide Results

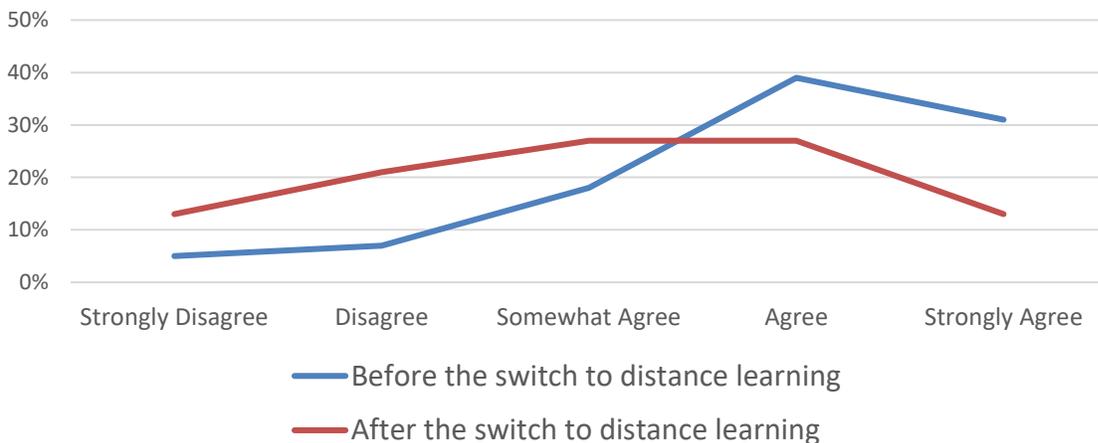
My child's teacher was able to meet the individual needs of my child.



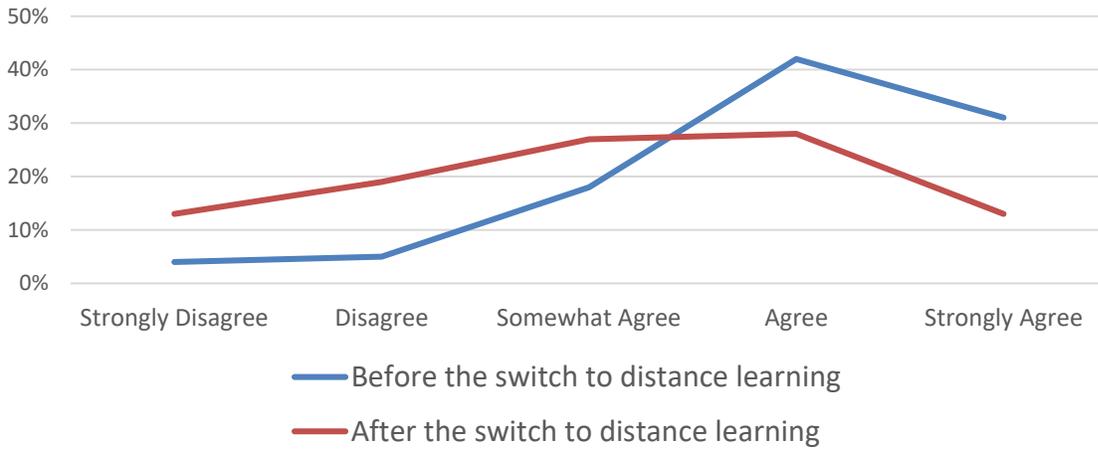
My child was invested and engaged in their learning.



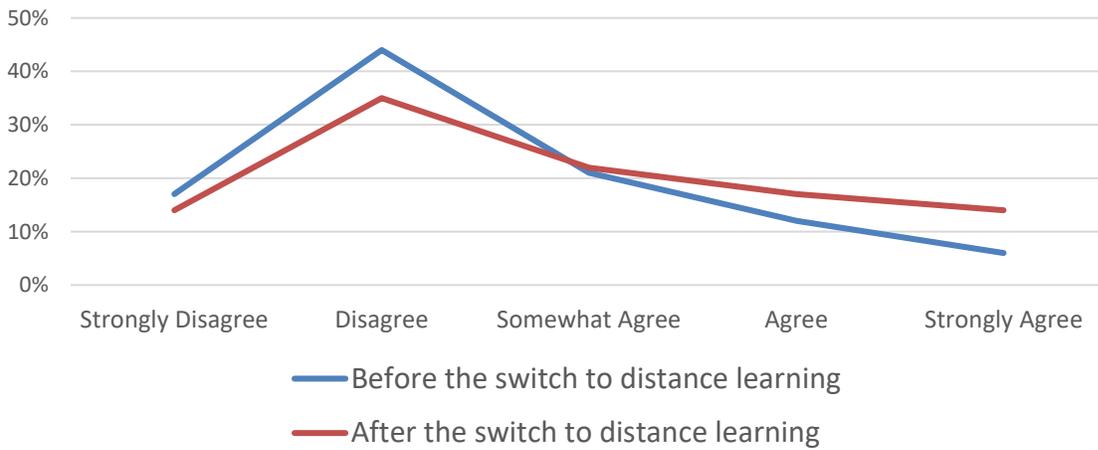
I was satisfied with the way the school supported my child's social and emotional growth.



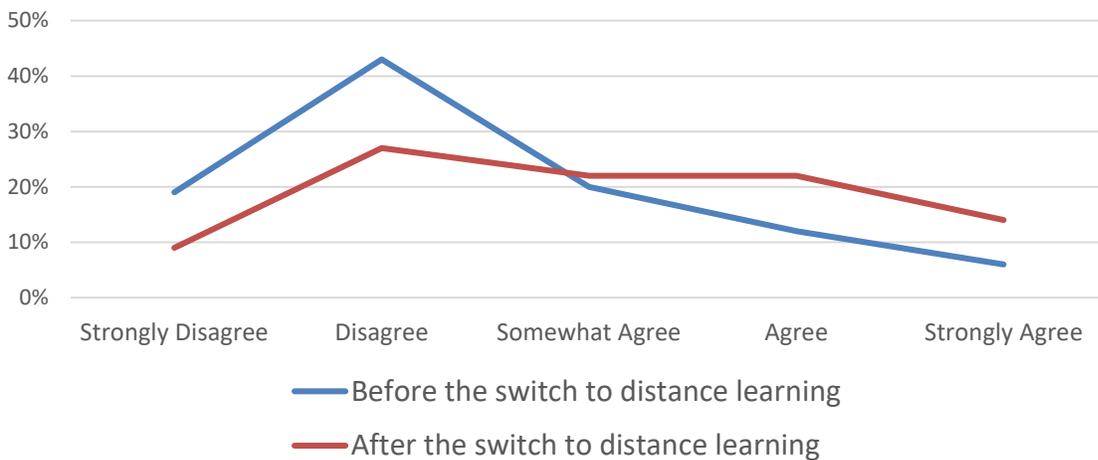
I am satisfied with the way the school supported my child’s intellectual growth.



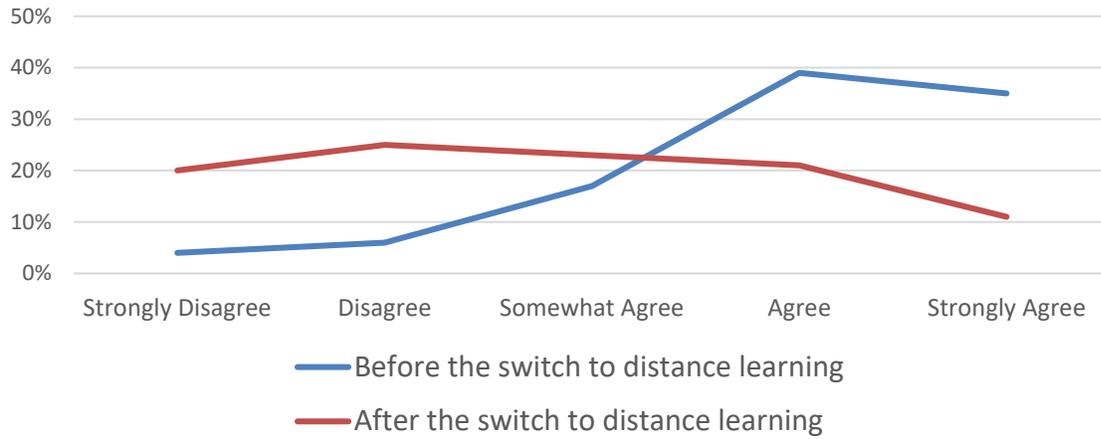
My child was stressed by the school’s academic expectations.



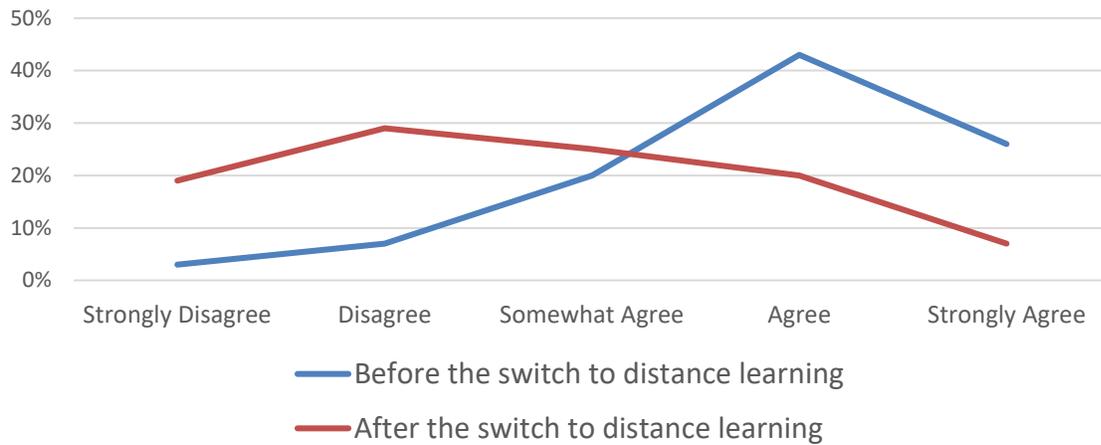
My child complained that school is boring.



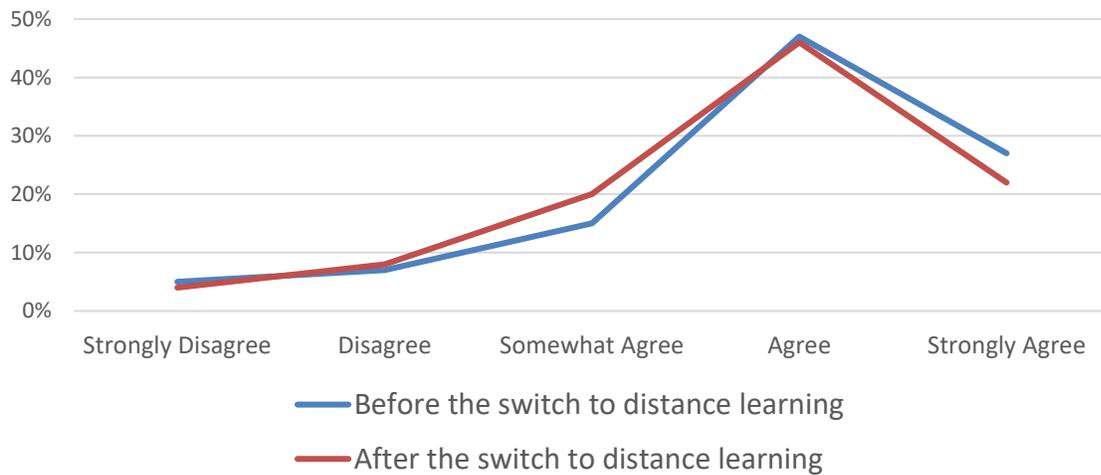
My child enjoyed school.



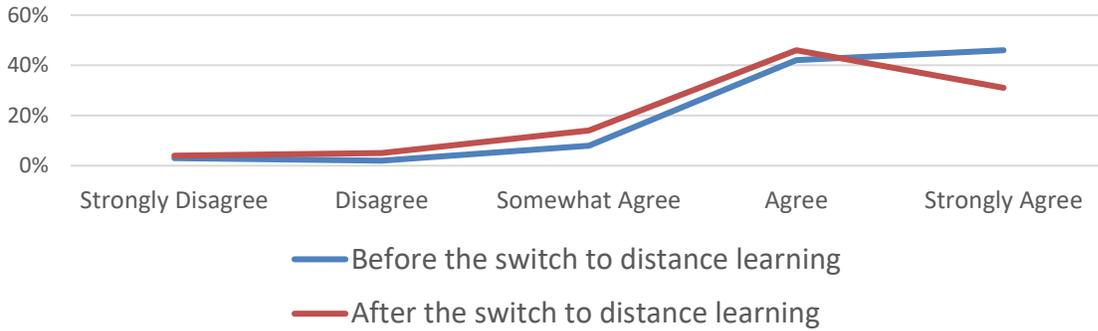
My child was supported by their peers.



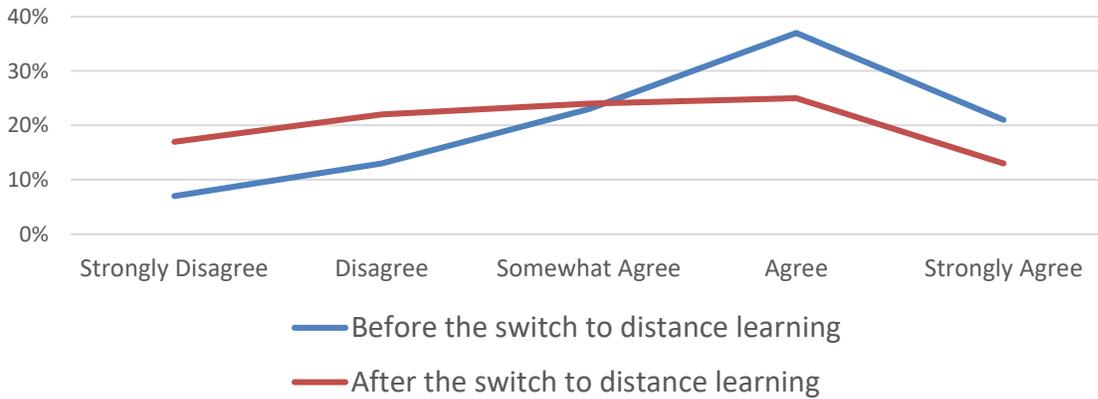
My family's language and culture was reflected in and respected by their learning environment.



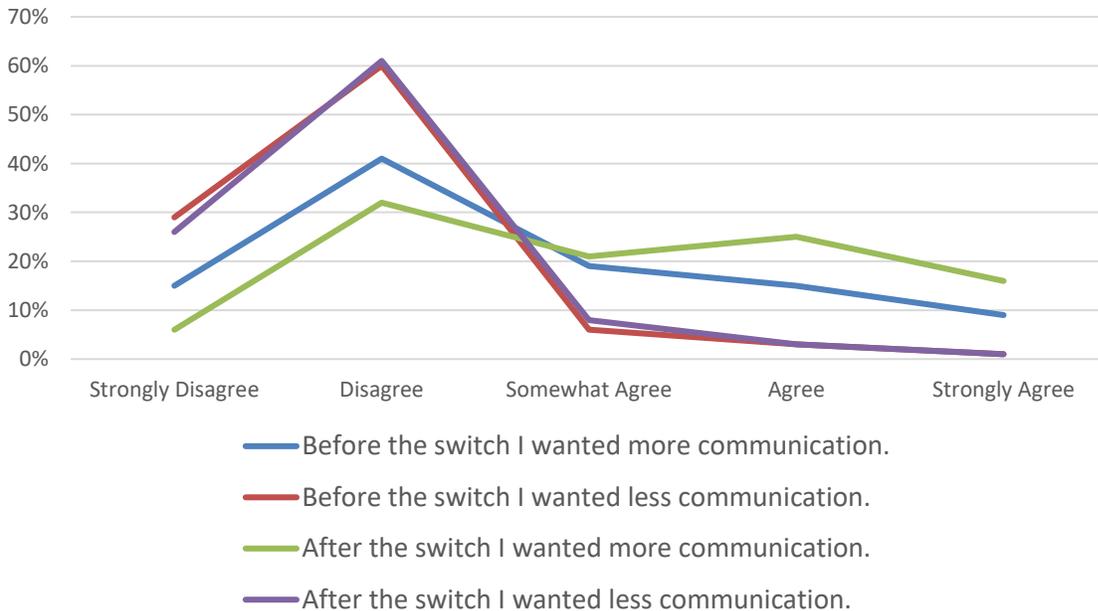
My child's school provided guidance and resources in a language that is accessible to me and my family.



I was satisfied with the information on how to help my child with learning at home.



Preference for frequency of school-home communication:



APPENDIX B

Survey Methodology

Design

The May 2020 Family Education Survey was designed during the COVID-19 pandemic as a means to seek feedback from families impacted by distance learning orders. The survey was crafted in alignment to the PED's organizational goal of supporting whole child growth and development. Items from TriPod's existing question item banks were chosen from the sub-categories of *Family Survey items*, *Distance Learning Survey items*, and *SEL Environment Survey items*. The PED requested customization of some items to measure children and families experiences before and after the implementation of distance learning. In addition, the PED added a series of background questions in order to perform an equity-centered analysis of the disaggregated data. During the planning process, PED's Community Engagement team collaborated with representatives from the legislature, Governor's office, and cross-bureau Directors to ensure a thorough and thoughtful design process.

Data Collection

NM PED and Tripod partnered in an iterative process to design a survey to capture family experiences with schooling before and during distance learning. Once the survey content and structure was finalized, Tripod programmed the survey in Qualtrics. TriPod generated an open link to access the survey which was then distributed by the NM PED communications team to families state-wide. The survey was provided in English, Spanish, and Navajo. After three weeks open, we closed the survey, with 21,356 responses regarding 23,222 children. Upon closing the survey, Tripod created a dashboard in which analyses could be conducted

Analysis

Using the dashboard created by Tripod, NM PED utilized the filtering capabilities present to examine trends by LEA and subpopulations of interest. To protect student-level identity information, data were suppressed if the number of responses in a particular subgroup fell below ten.

Validation

Survey results and analysis of responders' demographics were compared to our datasets of student enrollment located at <https://newmexicoschools.com/>. Where applicable, discrepancies between the demographics of the surveys responders and the demographics of our enrolled students is noted throughout the text.